

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001334

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

PASS UNVIE VIENNA FOR LISA HILLARD AND ANNE STARZ
DOE PLS PASS TO NNSA - GREG DWYER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ENRG](#) [KNNP](#) [TRGY](#) [PARM](#) [NI](#) [IAEA](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA TO ENACT PEACEFUL USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY;
IAEA SAYS IT WILL HELP BUILD UP TO EIGHT NUCLEAR REACTORS

REF: ABUJA 000570

(U) 1. This is an action request -- see paragraph 10.

(U) 2. Summary. Nigeria is now beginning to act on its April 2003 policy decision to pursue the peaceful use of nuclear power to generate electricity. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says it will assist the Government of Nigeria (GON) in its program for Nigeria's peaceful use of nuclear energy, and the IAEA recommends the GON build five to eight nuclear power plants by 2030 to help meet the country's electricity needs. End summary.

(U) 3. Nigeria is now beginning to act on its April 2003 policy decision to pursue the peaceful use of nuclear power to generate electricity. On July 7, the acting economic counselor and the embassy's economic officer met with two International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) officials and two Government of Nigeria (GON) officials concerning Nigeria's intention to build five to eight nuclear power plants by 2030. The IAEA officials were Hans-Holger Rogner, head of the planning and Economic Studies Section, Department of Nuclear Energy; and Vincent Nkong-Njock, program management officer for the Africa Section of the Department of Technical Cooperation. A.O. Aliyu and I.H. Zarma, both of the Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN), also attended. The IAEA met with embassy officers, and separately with the French Embassy, at the GON's request.

(U) 4. These meetings took place, and the IAEA delegation visited Nigeria, because the GON now has begun to implement actively its new "National Energy Policy." According to documentation, this policy dates back to April 2003, but the GON announced the policy only in June 2005. That month, President Olusegun Obasanjo, working with the ECN, launched this energy policy, which had been in the works for more than a decade and which states, "Policy: The nation shall pursue the exploitation of nuclear power for peaceful purposes."

(U) 5. During their meeting with embassy officers, the IAEA officials discussed Nigeria's degree of cooperation to date on nuclear issues, specifically the IAEA's recommendations for improving security at two Nigerian nuclear facilities: the Sheda Science and Technology Complex irradiation facility, and the Zaria research nuclear reactor at the Center for Energy Research and Training. The IAEA's Nkong-Njock said Nigeria's current output of electric power is between 4 and 6 megawatts but that this figure should be 10 times as high for a country of Nigeria's population. The IAEA's Rogner noted that currently only 42 percent of Nigerians have access to the country's electric-power grid. He added that the electricity generated by Nigerians' home diesel generators and businesses' generators equals that produced by the country's electric-power network, and that Nigerian industry is largely self-sufficient as an energy producer.

(U) 6. According to Rogner, the GON hopes to have nuclear reactors operating by 2015 but that this is unlikely to happen. He said the IAEA's recommendation is that Nigeria have five to eight nuclear power plants operating by the end of 2030, and that to reach this figure, Nigeria should build a reactor every three to five years, with the pace of construction increasing as Nigeria develops its nuclear expertise. In terms of Nigeria's building these reactors, Rogner said the IAEA would insist that Nigeria "do it right" because "one strike, and you're out." He also declared the IAEA will seek the "highest level of transparency" for the sake of the international community.

(U) 7. Nkong-Njock said that, once Nigeria was at the point of starting to build nuclear reactors, an IAEA official would visit Nigeria every three to four months to oversee matters. He added that the IAEA also will advise Nigeria on its power-generation needs. Nkong-Njock additionally noted that, although the GON is a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Nigeria still has not declared that it will allow unrestricted, unannounced visits by IAEA inspectors.

(U) 8. In discussing Nigeria's existing nuclear facilities at Sheda and Zaria, Nkong-Njock said their physical protection "is still lacking." He noted that at the Zaria reactor, the GON already has implemented most of the IAEA's recommendations, including for nuclear waste management. Nkong-Njock said, however, that the GON has not yet implemented at Sheda "many" of the IAEA's recommendations, including measures for security and safety.

(SBU) 9. Begin comment: The two Nigerian officials at this meeting said nearly nothing but rather deferred almost completely to the two IAEA officials. Neither the GON officials nor the IAEA officials asked what was the U.S. Government's policy toward Nigeria's pursuit of the peaceful use of nuclear power, or toward Nigeria's plan to build up to eight nuclear reactors. The IAEA officials at the meeting appeared to believe Nigeria's construction of eight reactors would proceed without significant difficulties. They also seemed to have no appreciation for concerns that might arise in maintaining security at these reactors if they are built. End comment.

(U) 10. Action request: Embassy Abuja requests that the Department of State and the U.S. Department of Energy review their policy on Nigeria's intention to build five to eight nuclear power plants, and then communicate this policy to Embassy Abuja.

CAMPBELL